

CHAPTER 108

August 4, 2011

“Huh? What are you doing out so late? It’s dangerous, you know. Go home.”

Justin had been making his way back from a quick stop at Junes once he realized they were all out of instant noodles at home when he bumped into Adachi again. Physically, mind you. Either Justin needed to learn to watch where he was walking, or there was something about Adachi that he physically could not avoid colliding with him. Though to be fair, Adachi had stopped getting irritated with Justin over that by this point. It happened so often that he had automatically associated the sensation of walking into someone with Justin. Regardless, Justin raised his eyebrow in puzzlement as Adachi warned him of the dangers of nighttime apparently. Justin could not think of a single thing about this town that would be dangerous at night. Mitsuo was in jail right now, and last Justin checked, the only other criminals in this town were Kurt and his ex-goons. Nothing Justin hadn’t been able to handle before.

“I just had to pick up some dinner; we completely ran out of instant noodles at my place.” Justin calmly explained, taking a quick glance at the contents of the plastic bag in his hand. Nothing but instant noodles and a few TV dinners. He was getting awfully sick of eating microwave chicken, but alas, it wasn’t like he was going to be able to do any better with a stove. Adachi smiled faintly at Justin as he rummaged through his plastic bag with his eyes, eyeing every little thing he had bought. That would probably last him a week tops, but he wasn’t in the mood to do a full shopping trip this late at night. Just some stuff to hold the two over until he got around to it.

“You must have a lot of time on your hands. Your parents will be on your ass you know.” Adachi joked, a mischievous smile spanning across his face. Justin had by this point been completely desensitized to people making remarks about his now deceased parents. He didn’t even look up from the contents of his bag as the two walked down the street to clarify to Adachi that there were no parents to get on his ass. Thank god for that.

“My folks are dead. Like I said, it’s just me and my sister.” Justin explained before finishing taking inventory of the contents of his shopping bag, holding it by his side as he turned his attention back over to Adachi. He had a more than shocked expression. First of all, both Maya and Justin were sixteen, or at least around that age if Adachi’s calculations were worth anything. He wasn’t even sure of the legality of it. It was entirely legal, of course; just very abnormal. Adachi rubbed at the back of his head nervously, trying to justify his comment now that he realized just how offensive that might seem right about now.

“Oh, uh... Sorry... I didn’t mean-“ Adachi nervously tried to cover his basis, though Justin eventually cut him off with a simple shake of his head and wave of his hand. Adachi sighed slightly with relief knowing that Justin hadn’t taken his remark as offensive. Though his relief soon changed back to disappointment as the two continued to walk, stopping at his destination. Souzai Daigaku, to be precise. Whenever Chie wasn’t dragging Justin to Aiya’s for steak, she usually dragged him here for steak skewers. Basically, Chie’s diet consisted of steak, instant noodles, and more steak. Well needless to say, Adachi was disappointed to find the place closed shut already. He hadn’t eaten yet, and was hoping to grab a bite on his way home from work. “I knew it! Stores out here close too soon.”

“Haven’t eaten yet?” Justin questioned as Adachi hung his head with disappointment. He almost looked like he was considering smashing the door in and grabbing something to eat anyway. Adachi nodded his head, letting out a huff of hot air. This was exactly the kind of punishment he got for being lazy.

“I got off work early, so I thought I’d make something, but then I got lazy.” Adachi explained to Justin, all the while a slight smirk began to cross Justin’s face. Oh the magic of procrastination; how it always seemed to screw you over somehow. “What should I do? I have tons of nimono at home...” Adachi grimaced. He didn’t want to touch that stuff, but that old lady just kept piling it on him. He had to get read of it somehow, but if he ate one more bite of it, he was going to hurl. He NEEDED this steak today, something to break up the nimono. That wasn’t happening apparently.

“Why, Tohru-chan! How is work? Are you still working hard?” The voice that Adachi dreaded so much echoed from behind the two as that elderly woman made her way up to the two. Adachi immediately put a scowl on his face. And could you blame him? Justin could sort of sympathize for this woman, wanting to keep an eye on the man that bore resemblance to her son. It was really quite touching. But it was also very annoying being ambushed by this woman every twelve seconds.

“Oh... H-Hi. Yeah, I just got off...”

“Have you had dinner yet? You’re young! You need to eat up! Would you like to come to my house? I’m making your favorite- nimono!” The elderly woman tried to coax Adachi into spending dinner with her. Adachi was very visibly panicking though. He could not swallow another bite more of her crappy nimono; it might just kill him if he did. Adachi looked around in horror, trying to think of SOMETHING to get him out of this. He wasn’t having much luck.

“Oh, uh, today? I’ve... got a... That’s right! I promised this kid I’d eat dinner with him!” Adachi eventually shouted, realizing the most obvious explanation for why he couldn’t go was to just say he was busy doing something with the person standing beside him. Justin shot Adachi a confused glance, though he eventually caught on that he was just bluffing. He’d have no problem with Adachi grabbing a bit from his house; just so long as he wasn’t expecting fine cuisine. “He’s my boss’ nephew,”

Adachi lied, playing off Justin as Yu, "So I can't say no... Maybe next time." Adachi nervously laughed, hoping she would buy his lie.

"Oh... That's too bad. Well, next time, then! Good night." The elderly woman seemed only slightly disappointed as she marched away from the two. Adachi was practically holding his breath until she was completely out of sight, letting out a huge sigh as she was finally out of audio range. That could have gone horribly wrong, horribly fast. Thank god Justin was there, otherwise he would have been eating nimono for dinner. Again.

"...She really sucks away my will to live. Can you imagine how awkward dinner would be, just me and her!? I don't really like her nimono, anyway. The lotus root is too tough." Adachi grimaced aloud. Justin chuckled slightly to himself. Something about the situation Adachi had unwillingly been thrust into tickled his funny bone a little. "Oh, uh, sorry for using you like that. You were a big help." Adachi thanked Justin for... well, pretty much just being there at the right time. Justin shrugged slightly.

"No worries; just happy to help." Justin remarked. It was quiet for a moment between the two, as a sudden realization struck Justin. "...Oh but wait, you still haven't eaten, huh?" Justin questioned. Adachi nodded with suspicion. He wasn't entirely sure where this was heading, but he wasn't sure if he liked it. "...Well, you COULD drop by my house if you want. I'm no cook, but I don't really need to be to heat up some instant noodles." Justin remarked sarcastically, pulling out a package of instant noodles from his bag to show it off to Adachi. Adachi was needless to surprised. I mean, he had instant noodles at home, but he was never one to turn down food. Unless it was that nimono. There were exceptions to everything after all.

"At your place? Well isn't that a generous offer." Adachi remarked, slightly pleased by the proposal Justin was putting forward. He couldn't deny that he was curious what his living conditions were like without any parents, so on top of free food, curiosity was slowly sealing the deal for Adachi. "But... Does that mean it'll just be us? Isn't that weird?" Adachi suddenly realized as he mused about what Justin's house was like. Justin shook his head a bit.

"Well Maya'll be there too." Justin shrugged. They wouldn't be completely alone, though Adachi would be eating dinner with a bunch of teenagers. It would really depend on whether or not he'd be comfortable with that. Justin could understand if he wasn't. Justin had considered perhaps inviting Kurt over too, so that Adachi had someone closer to his age to talk to, but then he realized drug dealers and cops don't mix. Adachi wore a slightly perplexed expression on his face.

"You're seriously inviting me over? You don't think it'd be awkward?" Adachi stared at Justin with perplexion, not entirely sure if Justin knew what he was asking. Justin shrugged. It wouldn't be awkward to Justin; he hung out with a drug dealer that was a good four or five years older than him, so age or occupation wasn't an issue for

him. And he had his shadow in his head that had pretty much desensitized him to everything else. Point being, nothing was awkward for Justin anymore. "...Why not." Justin smiled faintly before giving a slight throw of his arm to gesture Adachi to follow him.

"So do you cook like this all the time?"

Adachi had been sitting at the table with Maya and Justin, waiting for their instant noodles to finish so they could eat. Adachi was right about one thing; it was a bit awkward to be eating dinner with a bunch of kids. I mean sure, he liked Justin, but he barely knew Maya, and the age difference made him feel like he couldn't talk about a lot of things. Maya was just confused with Adachi was doing here anyway; not that she had a problem with it, mind you. It was just a little out of the blue. And in all honesty, she swore she had got a couple of creepy glances from Adachi. Something about him just rubbed her the wrong way. But then; she hated a natural hatred of all cops after what had happened in California.

"Yeah pretty much; neither of us know how to cook, so we just eat TV dinners." Justin explained, popping open a can of cola for himself. Adachi didn't really seem all that surprised in honesty. He was more surprised that there were more people out there like him that had to eat instant noodles every day. Maya passed Justin a slight glare.

"Hey, speak for yourself. I can cook... kinda..." Maya tried to defend herself. Though Justin just tilted his head towards the ground, giving her that look he gave everyone when he knew they were bullshitting. "Alright fine. But I'm still a better cook than you." Maya eventually settled on a middle ground, pointing her chopsticks at Justin. Justin shrugged a little.

"You say that like that's a hard feat." Justin shook his head sarcastically before turning his attention back over to Adachi. "But yeah; we pretty much just eat instant noodles." Justin remarked with slight disappointment. He wasn't really sick of ramen, but eating it so much was kind of... boring. Justin had considered taking another ride up to Okina City to get some Burger King again. Oh how he missed American food. Adachi scanned the room, looking at their living environment. The house was pretty big for just the two of them, though he was much more surprised at how neat it had been. Save for a blanket that had been tossed on the couch, which Adachi had already guessed the implications of, everything was just so... clean. He couldn't even keep his place neat.

"So you two really live here all alone?" Adachi questioned, continuing to scan the room. "Must be tough without the old folks." Maya had been peeling open her container of instant noodles the second the comment hit her ears, at which point she stopped dead in her tracks. She understood he meant Justin's parents, what

with him telling everyone the two were related, but it still hurt to think of her own parents now that Adachi brought it up. Adachi and Justin immediately noticed too. Justin passed her a sympathetic look as she hung her head in sorrow, though Adachi was a bit more vocal as he tried to correct his mistake. "Oh, I'm sorry; I didn't mean--"

"It's fine." Maya harshly cut Adachi off. You could tell it most certainly wasn't fine, but she didn't want to talk about it. It was quiet for a moment between the three, much to Adachi's dissatisfaction. He should have known this would be awkward. Justin wasn't going to have any of that, though. He couldn't get mad at Maya for reacting the way she was; she was reacting the way anyone her age would. Besides; her and her father were really close; it would just be pure evil for Justin to tell her to get over it. Instead, he opted to just try and keep the conversation moving, and away from anything to do with their parents.

"It's not so bad. We don't have much money, but we make do with what we've got. Electric bills are a bitch though. We only get so much from the trust fund a month, ya know?" Justin spoke up, breaking the silence as he opened his own instant noodles. Adachi was already slurping his down long before the others had started eating. It was kind of rude in retrospect, but no one could blame him for wanting to eat and get out at that point. Adachi shook his head slightly. He didn't know anything about trust funds so he couldn't honestly say he did know. But he did get the general gist; they lived a simple life with the bare minimum. Must be tough living this kind of life, especially at their age.

"I'm starting work Monday, so hopefully we'll have some more money to put towards food and crap." Maya remarked sadly. You could tell the thought of her father was still on her mind, though she was forcing herself to pretend it wasn't. Adachi's eyes widened with surprise as he paused his indulgences in the noodles in front of him. That was not what he had expected to hear. From his understanding, Maya and Justin were the same age. What was Maya doing with a job?

"Huh? Work? Shouldn't you be in school?" Adachi questioned. Unless this was a part-time job or something, he wouldn't expect Maya to be cutting school to put some money on the table. Especially when Adachi knew for a fact that Justin WAS going to school. What the hell was Justin doing in school when Maya wasn't? Maya shook her head. It seemed Adachi was single-handedly trying to rip her heart; it wasn't that she didn't WANT to go to school; it was that she couldn't. First her father, now this. She almost wanted to tell him to get out. But she didn't; she just bit back her pain and tried to act socialble.

"I dropped out in eight grade." Maya put it delicately. She technically didn't drop out; she had just run away from home, and by extension school. And since she never completed the eight grade, it might as well have just been her dropping out. Adachi seemed even more confused. He didn't know when Justin's parents died, so

he was sort of assuming Maya dropped out when his parents bit the dirt. Which meant Justin took the education, and Maya took the job. Seemed kind of selfish if you asked him. Justin could already tell that's what Adachi was thinking too, given the look he was giving Justin right now.

"She dropped out before..." Justin paused, glancing over at Maya. She was staring at Justin with saddened eyes. He didn't even need to finish the sentence to know what he was going to say, and it fucking hurt. She just wished everyone would stop talking about dead parents. She couldn't take it anymore. It was breaking her heart. Justin sighed slightly turning his gaze back to Adachi. "...Before the accident." Justin put it subtly. Adachi nodded slightly, happy to get some clarification. It wasn't that Maya had been forced out of school, she did it of free will. At least to his knowledge anyway. It was quiet for a moment, an awkward tension between everyone as they all realized just how god awful Justin and Maya's lives were. No parents, no schooling in Maya's case... Yeah, it kind of sucked. It took a moment before Adachi broke the silence, trying to ease the tension.

"Umm... Hey, Maya, have you ever seen this trick?" Adachi questioned, extending his hand to reveal a 500 yen coin. If the trick was charity, Justin very much enjoyed this one. It wasn't, but hey, a guy could hope. Maya raised her eyebrow in confusion. Believe it or not, Maya had never once seen a magic trick. Not on TV, not in real life. All she knew was that trick about a magician pulling a rabbit out of his hat. "Alright, watch carefully." Adachi ordered her, closing his fingers on the palm of his hand, before shaking his fist up and down. "You watching?" Adachi questioned Maya again, much to her annoyance. No, she was just covering her eyes and going 'LALALA, NOT WATCHING!' Of course she was. Adachi smirked as he opened his hand again, to reveal the coin had disappeared, much to Maya's surprise and puzzlement. Justin smirked; he knew how he had done the trick. It wasn't exactly difficult to pull off, he just slipped it down his sleeve while he was shaking his fist. Maya didn't know that though; she was none the wiser. It was amazing how naïve she was, actually. It was almost as though she were a toddler watching their first magic trick. Mostly because she WAS watching her first magic trick. Blown away would be an inapt description of how Maya felt right now.

"What the hell...? H-How'd you do that!?" Maya questioned with excitement and enthusiasm. She had seen a lot of fucked up things over the last few years, but this? This took the cake. Which kind of concerned Justin in a way if she was more surprised by a sleight of hand than fucking demonic alternate versions of themselves and that weird shit she did with her eyes and that blue light crap. But oh well, it was nice to see she was having fun at the very least. "Come on, do it again." Maya pleaded with Adachi, much to his amusement. It was interesting to see a teenager begging him to do magic tricks. He would have thought they would have outgrown this kind of stuff by now.

“Nah, this time I’ll show you an even better one!” Adachi declared, producing a second coin... Or maybe the exact same coin; who even knew. Adachi clutched the coin in his hand once more, grinning mischievously as he gestured towards Maya with his head, trying to alert her that he was going to give her instructions. “Check your back pocket.” Adachi ordered. Maya seemed surprised, though she was even more surprised when she produced a coin from her back pocket. She didn’t keep anything back there, so the only way that would be there was if Adachi had done it. Justin smirked slightly. Looked like someone else was good at reverse pick-pocketing too. He had probably planted that long before the trick... Though Justin wasn’t entirely sure he was comfortable with Adachi inserting his hands around Maya’s ass area; even if it was just for a trick. As long as he didn’t have any mal intent though, he supposed it was alright.

“How are you doing that!?” Maya admired. Whatever grim memories had been gripping her moments earlier had long since been overtaken by her pure fascination. Adachi rubbed at the back of his head with pride and slight embarrassment. He never thought he would be praised for doing a few magic tricks. Especially not someone’s Maya’s age. Most girls her age had been complete bitches to him; he just couldn’t get along with them. If only more people shared Maya’s blissful innocence.

“I’m pretty good with my hands, so it comes easy to me.” Adachi remarked, very much proud of his skills right now. Justin passed him a slight ‘might want to reword that’ glance. Thank god Maya didn’t have a dirty mind; though you would think she’d be a little more cautious about remarks like that after meeting some less than savory characters while trying to get smokes. “Maybe I should have been a magician. Then I wouldn’t be in such a- Uh... well... I guess there’s no job like a government job. It’s not like I can get a job working with my hands.”

“You can in Vegas.”

“Showtime.”

The two shadows had been working their business on Maya and Justin, mocking them and generally trying to exploit their weaknesses; things they didn’t want people to know. Maya’s shadow was working on Maya’s desires for love, while Justin’s shadow... Well... Justin’s shadow was just being an asshole. The truth was; even though Maya’s shadow had been forcing him to go through with this, he didn’t want to leave. He’d kill Justin no problem, but if he did that... would he have to leave? Would he have to leave behind all he knew of this world? What if the other side was worse? What if the other side wasn’t all they had hoped it was? He wanted to stay. And so, the shadow simply mocked Justin, never revealing what exactly he was. Because if he did, he just might never be the same again. Justin glared at his shadow, pure anger in his voice.

“What the fuck is that supposed to mean?” Justin shouted at the shadow, not entirely sure what was going on. The shadow simply smirked back at him, finding humor in his ignorance. Maya’s shadow had already succeeded in her job; and that meant she would get off Justin’s shadow’s back about murdering their counterparts. She got what she wanted; she could give less of a damn about Shadow Justin now. Selfish bitch.

“Just watch and learn kiddo!” The shadow mocked as the two turned their attention over to Shadow Maya, her body morphing into a twisted metal form, a steel winged monstrosity in a dirty ragged robe. It was like a fallen angel, beautiful in a twisted, intimidating way. It could kill you in the blink of an eye, but there was a certain radiance about it. Maybe Justin’s shadow admired Maya’s new form; maybe he just admired this show of power. Whatever it was, he could almost feel his heart skip a beat. Of course; he didn’t have a heart, so that wasn’t saying much. The point was, he was awestruck as Maya’s Shadow exploded out like a metal phoenix, overshadowing Maya scrambling away on the ground.

“I am a shadow. The true self.” It announced in a filtered machine voice, the light of its eye suddenly shining down on the two as it pointed the tip of its spear at them, intent to kill. With a single thrust of its spear, it could become one with the humans. And with Maya gone, Justin would be trapped here. She had no doubt his shadow would chicken out; he was always a pussy, but so long as Justin wasn’t walking around with the humans, spilling out the shadow’s true identity, she would be fine. Not that it would matter if Justin did try to tell anyone. The humans would just think he was insane, throw him in an asylum while Maya’s shadow got to go free. **“He may not love me, but that's okay. Love hurts.”**

“R-Run!” Teddie shouted at the two humans, causing Justin to pick up Maya but the wrist, pulling her out of the way of Maya’s shadow thrusting her spear down. The ground splintered where the spear embedded itself in the concrete below them, a surge of power cracking through the ground. Justin’s shadow laughed with glee at the pure power Maya’s shadow was showcasing. If this was what awaited him by killing Justin, he could get behind it. If there was one thing that shadow loved; it was power. The more power, the more control, the better.

The humans and Teddie soon darted off, fleeing from the shadows as Maya’s shadow gave chase. Justin’s shadow all the while, just strolled the entire way. He had no reason to run; not when Maya’s shadow was able to fucking fly; to cut them off and kill them at any second. So he simply walked, a wide smirk on his face as he heard the sounds of the ground crackling, the air splitting with each swing of that spear. He could just imagine the bloodshed, the corpse that he would walk in on when he finally caught up. It would be like a birthday surprise; only not his birthday. You could imagine how disappointed he was to find no dead bodies, no blood, no nothing. All he saw was the angelic figure of Maya’s shadow hovering over a shimmering television, its form slowly shifting back to the more humanoid one. And

when she reverted back, she was infuriated. Justin's shadow couldn't exactly say he was pleased too, as he approached the now snarling Maya's shadow, glaring at the television screen, hands balled up into fists.

"What the fuck...? Did you let them get out!?" Justin's shadow shouted with disgust as Maya's shadow tried to bite back her pure anger. She should have just smashed the goddamn television in; see them try to escape then. No. She had to get cocky. And now they knew she was in here; they weren't coming back anytime soon. And you know who she blamed for all this? Not herself, not the humans; hell not even Teddie. She blamed Justin's shadow. He didn't even try to help her catch them. He didn't even try to get Justin to deny him. He had ruined everything; he always did. She quickly turned around and got right into his face, shoving him slightly.

"This is YOUR fucking fault! You could have stopped them, but you fucking didn't! Now thanks to you I'm going to be stuck here for fucking ever! I am going to KILL you!" She threatened him. Of course, there was no real threat behind her words. Shadows could not kill shadows; it was one of the rules HE had given all of them. They'd probably all kill each other by now if that wasn't a rule. All the same, Justin's shadow wasn't a fan of being threatened with murder. He immediately shoved her back, pushing her against the television, damn near tipping one over.

"I didn't do jack shit! I don't even want to be part of your goddamned plan; but no. You just had to drag me into this. You couldn't just leave me the fuck alone." Justin's shadow snarled back, though he was interrupted by Maya's shadow punching him across the face. Before long the two were fist fighting, beating the ever loving crap out of each other. No killing was the rule, not no fighting. This was actually fairly common, believe it or not. Just over a lot stupider things than their human counterparts escaping. In fact, these were some of the first human counterparts in a long while. A good three or four years if he recalled correctly. It was understandable that Maya's shadow was pissed. And so, the two beat the crap out of watch other for what seemed like a good five minutes.

And all the while Teddie watched on with horror, backing away slowly as he tried to escape being noticed. You'd think with five minutes to make it out, he would have gotten out of sight; but alas no. He was scared stiff for too much of it to actually escape. Besides, the shadows never harmed him; he really didn't NEED to run. He just didn't want to stick around and risk it. There's a first time for everything after all. And today just might be that day. After beating each other up for a while, the two stopped, panting for a while. Maya's shadow was about to take another swing when Shadow Justin held up his hand to stop here.

"Wait, wait, wait... Stop." Shadow Justin cut her off. **"We're pointing fingers at the wrong person..."** Justin's shadow tried to plead with Shadow Maya to get

her to back down. She still had her hands in a fist, but she was willing to listen... For a moment anyway. **"We weren't the ones who helped them escape, now are we?"** Justin's shadow remarked turning her attention over to Teddie, who was very visibly frightened now as Justin's shadow slowly approached him, a vicious glare on his face. Maya's shadow's eyes widened almost immediately, with surprise. Shadow Justin might have been right; it kind of was Teddie's fault, not theirs. But the look on his face... He wasn't just going to scold Teddie; and that... That was going to be a problem. She immediately tried to get between the two before Shadow Justin broke one of the big rules: Do not interfere with Teddie. He was a special case, and the Shadows weren't allowed to do anything that could harm him.

"Whoa, what the fuck do you think you're doing!?" Maya shouted as she tried to cut off Justin from his target. **"You know the rules! Are you trying to get us both killed?"** Justin wasn't even paying Maya much attention as he continued to glare at Teddie over Maya's shoulder.

"You know, you've been a real pain in our ass. Everytime we're getting somewhere, you have to fucking interfere; you have to just let people out or ruin our plans. Don't think I don't know this is the first time you've done it either!" Justin's shadow scolded Teddie, slowly making his way up to him as Maya's shadow tried to hold him back. Teddie was cowering in fear as Shadow Justin closed the distance between them.

"H-Huh?"

"I'm ending this now." Justin's shadow declared, and with a quick sleight of his hand, the gleam of metal could be seen near his waist; a magnum in his hand. He didn't just intend to beat Teddie, to try and deter him from interfering. He out right intended to put him down. Maya's shadow's eyes widened with terror as she noticed the gun. Teddie was out right frantic, backing away as quickly as he could from the shadow with the gun.

"Whoa whoa whoa! Calm the fuck d-" Maya's shadow didn't even get to finish her sentence as Justin's shadow pushed her clean out of the way, raising the barrel of his gun to aim it straight at Teddie's head. Shadow Maya hit the ground hard after Justin's little shove, but she couldn't just lay there and let him do the deed. They'd both be dead if she didn't stop him. She groaned as she tried to force herself up off the ground. It would have been easier if Teddie screaming his head off wasn't giving her such a headache.

"You're luck runs out today." Justin's shadow declared, pure anger shadowing his judgement. Clearly he didn't give the slightest fuck about the rules right now. What were they going to do? Make him disappear? The way he say it, he was doing them all a service right now by getting rid of Ted. And if he died being a martyr... Well so be it. He'd die if it made this world better in SOME capacity. He started pulling on the trigger, ready to put a bullet in Teddie's skull, when Shadow Maya

jumped up and grabbed the arm gun, trying to wrestle it away from Justin. **“The fuck!? Get the fuck off me, you bitch!”**

“Put the goddamn gun down! Are you trying to get us all killed you fuckwit!? LET IT GO!” Maya pleaded with him, trying to get the gun out of his grip. It was latched on pretty tightly in all honesty; she couldn’t get his hand to budge at all as she tugged away at that metal death machine. Of course, Teddie had seen this as a good a time as any to run. And so he did, starting to back away at first before turning to outright dash away, screaming the whole way there.

“GET OFF, YOU WHORE! HE’S GETTING AWAY!” The shadow shouted at Shadow Maya, trying to get her off before Teddie got out of shooting range. He’d bust a cap in his ass one way or another. Alas, just as determined as he was to get rid of Teddie; to stop him from screwing over more shadows, Shadow Maya was determined to actually live. That wasn’t going to happen if Justin’s shadow laid a finger on Teddie. The struggle for the gun slowly got more violent, with Justin tugging violently at the gun to try and get it out of Maya’s clutch, tossing about Maya in the process as she tried to maintain a good grip on the instrument of death.

“Over my dead bod-“

Before Justin’s shadow even knew it, he had accidentally squeezed the trigger while tugging at the gun, while the barrel had been pointed right at Maya’s skull as they tangoed for control of the weapon. Within seconds, a lead bullet had splattered Shadow Maya’s brain matter everywhere. You couldn’t even recognize her anymore with the gaping hole in her skull; purple blood seeping out of every pore of her skull. The anger that had taken a hold of Justin’s shadow immediately turned to one of disgust in fear, his glare subsided to dilated pupils and wide eyes, his lips quivered and his voice whimpered as he stared at the now dead shadow.

The corpse had been standing merely by muscle tension, though that eventually gave way and the body dropped right at the shadow’s feet, horror sweeping over him as he started to regain his composure. He didn’t just break the rules; he had killed Maya’s shadow. He always said he would do it too, but he never really thought he would. And certainly not on accident. The shadow slowly backed away from the corpse, almost frozen in fear as he watched the blood pool up around the body. The shadow turned around and bent over to vomit a black liquid. **FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCKKKKKKKKKKKKKKK-**

The shadow vomited for a while, the stench of death taking complete control of him as he emptied his stomach contents out on the concrete below him. It was a while before he finally turned back to the body, eyes still wide with terror as he fell to his knees and crawled over to the body. He didn’t even care that he was getting covered in the shadow’s blood. He shook the body slightly, staring at her vacant eyed corpse, trying his hardest to make the reality nothing but a lie.

“Come on, wake up! Wake up, dammit- wake up...” Tears were starting to roll down the shadow’s face as he continued to shake the body, trying to get any sign of life out of her. She was long gone though; you don’t just pump lead into someone’s skull and expect them to get up and walk away. **“wake up wake up wake up... PLEASE! WAKE UP!”** Justin’s shadow gave one more shake trying to wake her from the slumber of death, to no avail. He fell back down on his knees, staring at the face of Maya’s shadow... He never wanted this. Sure they didn’t always get along, and sure, he had always thought of ending this bitch’s life... But he never wanted THIS. He didn’t need to have a heart to feel it break into as he stared at her dead body. **“...wake up... please...”** The shadow whimpered one last time before giving into the inevitable fact that she was long gone.

He just stared at the body for a while, tears rolling down his eyes. They always used to say shadow’s were incapable of crying; that it was a human thing. But Justin’s shadow was no human; if he was, he would have made it so things like THIS couldn’t happen. It was all the humans fault that had pushed them to this point; that had made this world so shitty that the shadows were trying to escape. And in the process... In the process she had to die. Justin’s shadow was no human... No, he never wanted to be human. He never wanted to be one of those... THINGS that had brought this upon her. All those fucking humans should be wiped out; exterminated for the atrocity that had happened here today. But now was not the time for the shadow’s vengeance. Now was a time for mourning.

The shadow sat there for what felt like an hour before the tears finally stopped. He wiped his eyes before reaching down, pushing Shadow Maya’s eyelids closed, and her jaw shut. He refused to let her corpse look like that... She deserved to at least die in dignity. The shadow whimpered slightly as he picked himself up from the ground... Shadow Maya deserved a proper death, a proper burial ceremony; but there was a problem with that. Justin’s shadow couldn’t do that without letting it be known he had broken the rules and killed another shadow. It was an accident, but they wouldn’t care. They’d kill him all the same. He wouldn’t die until she was avenged; until things changed around here. He refused to die...

And that only left him with one option. He needed to hide the body. The shadow looked around for any place nearby that would be a good place to store a corpse. Nothing; the city was so barebones you’d be able to tell where it was almost immediately... It took him a long while before he spotted something rather peculiar: a brick wall with a couple of loose bricks. The shadow stared at it for a moment before leaning down to pick up the body of his fallen comrade, making his way over to the wall to examine it. There was a small patch of bricks in the wall that seemed to slide away at the pressure of Justin’s hand. He stared at it for a moment before pushing one brick in and taking a glance through the peep hole he had made.

The inside of the building was boarded up, run down and dusty. No one had been in there for ages; though that was probably because only three shadows had lived in

this general part of their world. One of the shadows had long since been gone, and the other... Well the other Shadow Justin held in his arms right now. It horrified him every time he stared down at the corpse's face, blood dripping down its pale cheeks. Why of all the people did it have to be HER? Why'd it have to be...? The shadow whimpered a little bit before tearing up again. He needed to get rid of the body quick; otherwise he'd just start wailing again. He just couldn't look at her anymore. It tore away at his heart and soul too much. He quickly pulled at the bricks in the wall before dropping the corpse into the building, replacing the bricks quickly to hide the evidence that he had ever been here.

And when he finished the job, he turned around and vomited some more. He breathed in and out heavily as he finished spewing out his stomach contents, trying to calm himself down. If he panicked, he'd just make himself sicker and sicker until he ended up doing himself in. He needed to stay calm, take deep breaths...

"Alright, alright, calm down... It was just an accident. Accidents happen in the dark. They'll never find the body... This never happened... Just forget her... forget... Oh god..." The shadow muttered before running his fingers down his face, trying to regain his composure; screaming into the palms of his hands as he tried to get all the fear and pain in his system out of his system. But alas, no matter how much he tried, he never could forget what had happened here, the pain in his chest lingered. No amount of screaming could change the atrocities he had committed... The horrible sight of her bloody face...

It haunted him around every corner he took for the remainder of his days in the shadow world.